

WASHINGTON – Congressman Jo Bonner's request that the Justice Department begin the process of an impartial audit of the Gulf Coast Claim's Facility has been included in legislation approved by the House Appropriations Committee Wednesday. Congressman Bonner is a member of the House Appropriations Committee.

Report language accompanying the fiscal year 2012 Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Act directs the Justice Department to identify an independent auditor to evaluate the Gulf Coast Claims Facility's claims procedures and the qualifications of its employees.

"As we approach the one-year anniversary of the creation of the GCCF, many South Alabama businesses and individuals are still complaining about unfair treatment of their oil spill damage claims by the BP-financed fund that has been tightly controlled by administrator Ken Feinberg," Congressman Bonner said. "With BP now calling for the GCCF to wind down payments, it is imperative that an accurate accounting of Mr. Feinberg's claims system be made public.

"Last month, I met with U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder in Orange Beach personally asking him to order an impartial audit of the GCCF. Today, the House Appropriations Committee also called upon the Justice Department to begin the process of an independent review of the claims process."

The report language accompanying the legislation includes: "To ensure that the GCCF is operating in accordance with the letter and intent of existing law, and in a timely, transparent and consistent manner, the Committee directs the Department, in consultation with the Government Accountability Office (GAO), to identify an independent auditor to evaluate GCCF's claims determination methodologies and the qualifications of GCCF personnel."

"On several occasions in the last six months," Congressman Bonner added, "I have requested the GCCF undertake an independent audit to answer lingering questions about their procedures. The language passed by the House Appropriations Committee today directing the Department of Justice to undertake that effort is a critical step forward in gaining answers to those questions and bringing some certainty about the efficacy and fairness of the GCCF to the people of the Gulf Coast."

GCCF Audit Report Language Approved by the House Appropriations Committee:

Gulf Coast Claims Facility.—The Committee is aware of the ongoing controversy regarding the payment of claims to victims of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill under the Gulf Coast Claims Facility (GCCF) and the Department's concerns regarding the application of appropriate standards for the GCCF under existing federal law. The Committee appreciates the testimony of the Attorney General that DOJ will do as much as it can to make sure that the claims process works for the residents of the Gulf Coast. □ To ensure that the GCCF is operating in accordance with the letter and intent of existing law, and in a timely, transparent and consistent manner, the Committee directs the Department, in consultation with the Government Accountability Office (GAO), to identify an independent auditor to evaluate GCCF's claims determination methodologies and the qualifications of GCCF personnel.

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